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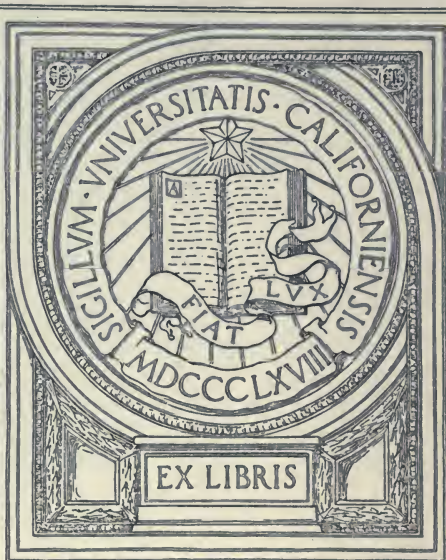
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Paddly Pools *A*
Little Fairy Play
by Miles Malleson

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Paddly Pools



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Paddly Pools *A*
Little Fairy Play by
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Gift of Mrs. D. Forest to Poliope

TO
MARJORY HOLMAN,
WHO GAVE SUCH BEAUTY TO TONY WHEN
HE FIRST CAME TO LIFE,
AND
FABIA DRAKE,
THE LITTLE OLD MAN "GENIUS OF ELEVEN"
WHO "HELD THE STAGE WITH THE GRIP OF AN
ACCOMPLISHED ACTRESS."



It gives in fairy language deepest meanings ; and if well staged would be an abiding joy both to children and to up-grown folk.—*EDWD. CARPENTER.*

PADDLY POOLS

was first produced at The New Theatre on the afternoon of Tuesday, April 11th, 1916, at a Special Performance by the Students of the Academy of Dramatic Art, for whom it was written, with the following cast :—

Grandpa	Miss JOAN TEMPLE.
Tony	Miss MARJORY HOLMAN.
The Little Old Man	Miss FABIA DRAKE.
His Three Friends	{ (1) Miss CICELY DAVIES.
	{ (2) Miss CÉCILE GREEN.
	{ (3) Miss BETTY POTTER.
The Short Green Grass	Miss IVY EDWARDS.
The Wild Flowers	Miss NORA SWINBURNE.
The Trees	Miss GLADYS SPENCER.
The Soul of All the Rabbits	Miss ESTELLE DESMOND.
	Miss STELLA DE VALOIS.
	Miss LUCY MACKAY.
	Miss DOLLY NEAVE.
	Miss FANNY DEITZ.
The Spirits of the Sunset	{ Miss VERA FOSTER.
	{ Miss ETHEL HODGSON.
	{ Miss RUTH LENNARD.
	{ Miss DOROTHY TURNER.
	{ Miss SYBIL FAYE.

The Play produced by Mr. Norman Page.

Incidental Music by Mr. Norman O'Neill.

PADDLY POOLS

A LITTLE FAIRY PLAY

CHARACTERS

GRANDPA.

TONY.

THE LITTLE OLD MAN.

HIS THREE FRIENDS.

THE SHORT GREEN GRASS.

THE WILD FLOWERS.

THE TREES.

THE SOUL OF ALL THE RABBITS.

THE SPIRITS OF THE SUNSET.

Scene I.—This side.

Scene II.—Over the other side.

Scene III.—This side again.

SCENE I : THIS SIDE.

Outside an old creeper-laden cottage in a clearing in a wood, GRANDPA is asleep.

The centre of the stage is strewn with toys—Gollywogs, fluffy animals on wheels, etc., etc.—and in the midst of them a child, flat on his back. His head is towards the footlights ; one leg, resting on the knee of the other, waves in the air. The cottage—if it is visible at all—is on the audience's left of the stage. All along the back of the scene is a bank of about four feet high. Beyond, only the sky. A signpost on the audience's left, silhouetted against the sky, and three old tree trunks, one on the left and the other two on the extreme right, break the sky-line.

TONY. (*A little while after the curtain has risen.*)
Grandpa ! . . . Grandpa !! . . . GRANDPA !!!

GRANDPA. What is it, Tony ?

TONY. I want to know something.

GRANDPA. What is it now ?

TONY. I've been watching that cloud—ooh, for ever, ever, ever so long. *Hours*, I should think.

GRANDPA. You've been lying there exactly five minutes.

TONY. (*Ignoring this.*) First it had a face like Daddy—now it's got like old Mrs. Parkinson's pig. . . . What makes it go like that ?

GRANDPA. The wind, Tony.

TONY. How does the wind make it go like that ?

GRANDPA. By blowing it.

TONY. *Why* does it blow it ? (*GRANDPA decides to go to sleep again.*) . . . Grandpa ! . . . GRANDPA !! (*GRANDPA grunts.*) I want to know something. When the little postman without a moustache came with that brown letter, tears came out of your eyes and ran all down your face—and you didn't wipe them away—you looked awfully funny. . . . Why ? . . . Grandpa, why doesn't Daddy come back ?

GRANDPA. Tony.

TONY. Yes, Grandpa ?

GRANDPA. Come here. (*The child scrambles up and goes to him.*) Come nearer . . . nearer. My old eyes aren't what they were. There. (*He takes the child's hands in his.*) Tony, I don't want you to ask me these questions . . . not for a little while. . . . Some day you shall know the answers—but not now.

TONY. All right, Grandpa, but when I'm grown up

you're going to tell me *everything* I want to know, aren't you ?

GRANDPA. (*The child's hand in his—very lovingly.*) When you've grown up, Tony, I may know some of the answers. And I shall be beyond the reach of your ears. . . . I think we must all find the answers for ourselves. . . . There, there, run back and play—and no more questions.

TONY. (*After selecting a woolly animal to play with.*) Grandpa. . . . (*Silence.*) Grandpa.

GRANDPA. Yes ?

TONY. Grandpa—may I ask one more question—only just one more—please ?

GRANDPA. Well ?

TONY. (*Suddenly getting big with mystery—creeping close to his grandfather.*) Have you ever seen the Little Old Man who lives over the other side ?—all among the tree roots, he lives—and when you look at him he disappears—I've seen him.

GRANDPA. What queer things you do get into your head ! Now be quiet and let me go on with my snooze. . . . (*He settles himself to sleep.*) And, Tony, you're not to go over the other side by yourself.

TONY. (*Returning to squat among his toys and play with them—talking to himself.*) All right. But if Daddy'd come home he'd take me. When I asked Nurse she told me he'd gone out to kill people like the pictures in my book. But I know *that's* not a true answer 'cos Daddy would never hurt anything. He used to show me how to get the rabbits out of the traps without hurting them—and how to lift the baby birds back into their nests—and the daddy bird used to sing to us all the way home to reward us. (*The child sings*

a song to himself. During the song, THE LITTLE OLD MAN appears from the other side and stands outlined against the sky, on the top of the bank. The song continues until TONY, a large animal in his arms, gets up and suddenly sees THE LITTLE OLD MAN on the bank. A dead pause. The animal drops from his hands. THE LITTLE OLD MAN disappears. The child rushes across to his grandfather.) Grandpa! (GRANDPA is shaken violently from his sleep.) The Little Old Man! the Little Old Man! (He runs up the bank.) There he is! I can see him! Grandpa! He's beckoning to me.

GRANDPA. (Not really awake.) Tony . . . Tony, come here. (The child comes down the bank.) You're not to go over the other side . . . stop here with your toys—and don't disturb me again. (He settles to sleep. The child creeps up the bank—and waves across to the other side. Then coming back once more to fetch his largest woolly animal to give him courage, he re-climbs the bank.)

TONY. Little Old Man! Little Old Man! I'm coming! (And he disappears over the other side. An immediate black-out. Then at once—)

SCENE II: OVER THE OTHER SIDE.

The signpost and tree trunks on the banks are reversed, as if one was looking at them from the other side.

Just under the bank, among the tree roots, is THE LITTLE OLD MAN. His THREE FRIENDS are with him.

LITTLE OLD MAN. I suppose it's somewhere about a thousand years since I've seen any of you—how are you?

1ST FRIEND. We are very well, thank you.

LITTLE OLD MAN. I'm glad. Thank you for coming. I'll tell you at once why I have asked for your help.

Some nights ago, I went out for a walk and became part of the sunset ; melting into the evening winds I wandered softly across the world. It was the hour when men return home to their women, when children run back to their mothers, when lover creeps out to meet lover. It has always been my favourite time for being out and about ; and yet, everywhere I went that night—and round the earth and back I went—everywhere I found suffering, suffering, suffering. I finished as a great storm and came home. And I haven't had a happy moment since. Now it may all be my imagination—that is why I sent to you, my three friends, to ask each of you to visit the world of men. Have you anything to tell me ?

1ST FRIEND. Yesterday I visited the cities of the Western world. I became the houses in which men live. I became the fires in their grates. I leapt and sprang and threw great dancing shadows on their walls—and old people crouched over me, silent and afraid. I stole up winding stairways and became the sheets and pillows on their beds. And on my whiteness, girls sobbed themselves to sleep, whispering the names of men.

2ND FRIEND. I spread myself, as golden sand, over the deserts of the East. Deep and far I lay, gazing up at the cloudless, breathless blue. Upon me tramped the feet of men and beasts ; and red and wet their blood mixed with my yellow dust.

3RD FRIEND. And I became the sea. Far and wide I flung myself against sheer cliffs. I was hurled high in hissing spray. Flecked with my own foam, I rolled and roared and broke against great rocks. Then I lay back, half across the world, kissed by the glinting sun, stirred into swelling rhythm by the winds. And men in great

ships of steel cleaved through my greens and blues and purples ; men with no eyes for my great beauty or for the flying clouds and changing skies, intent on their own work. And, as I wondered, I knew that the quiet dead were slipping down within me, down to the vast green soundless gloom beneath my waves.

LITTLE OLD MAN. (*After a pause.*) So. I have lived longer than the world—and never before have I known such sorrowing. And I am helpless to make it less. (*Suddenly TONY's song of Scene I. is heard quite plainly from behind the bank. They listen. THE LITTLE OLD MAN rises suddenly—he is excited.*) I have a plan. . . . I have a plan. . . . Wait.

(*He climbs on to the bank. Then TONY's voice—exactly as in Scene I.*)

TONY'S VOICE. Grandpa! The Little Old Man! The Little Old Man!

(*THE LITTLE OLD MAN climbs down the bank again and TONY immediately appears on the top of it.*

THE LITTLE OLD MAN beckons to him.)

TONY. There he is! I can see him! Grandpa! He's beckoning to me.

GRANDPA'S VOICE. (*Exactly as in Scene I.*) Tony . . . Tony, come here. (*TONY disappears.*) You're not to go over the other side . . . stop here with your toys and don't disturb me again.

(*TONY appears, disappears, and reappears with his woolly animal.*)

TONY. Little Old Man! Little Old Man! I'm coming!

(*TONY comes down the bank.*)

LITTLE OLD MAN. How d'you do, Tony?

TONY. (*Shaking hands politely.*) How d'you do,

Little Old Man ? but I don't know how you know I'm Tony.

LITTLE OLD MAN. O come, I've known you since you were born. Why, I've looked in to say good-night to you two or three times a week for years.

TONY. But I've never seen you.

LITTLE OLD MAN. You may not have recognised me, perhaps. I usually get into the ray of yellow light from the little blue lamp on the shelf above your bed, and shedding down on to your pillow, I find a wonderful playground in your hair—and occasionally if I've got time to spare when your Grandpa puts out the lamp, I jump into the night-light on the chair—and climb on to the ceiling—and look down and watch you till you drop to sleep. You don't look as if you really believed me.

TONY. You knew about my little blue lamp—and how Grandpa puts it out and the night-light on the chair . . . and yet if you'd been on the ceiling, I couldn't have missed you !

LITTLE OLD MAN. But you don't suppose that now you're looking at ME, do you ? (TONY *can only stare.*) Why, bless your soul ! I only live in this old body of mine for exactly the same reason as your Grandpa lives in his cottage. It's old and all tumbly down, but it's rather beautiful and it suits me. But it's no more ME than your Grandpa's cottage is your Grandpa.

TONY. It's awfully puzzling.

LITTLE OLD MAN. It's not half so bad as it sounds. Tony, you're going to stay with me just a little while—and when you go back to Grandpa—you'll understand. Excuse me for a moment. (*He turns to his THREE FRIENDS.*) My plan is growing. (*To the 1ST FRIEND.*) Fetch here the Soul of the Short Green Grass—tell him

that for a while he is to take charge of the soul of a child. (*Exit 1ST FRIEND.*) You to the Wild Flowers, the Trees, and the Soul of All the Rabbits. Tell them the same. (*Exit 2ND FRIEND.*) You to the Spirits of the Sunset. (*Exit 3RD FRIEND.*)

TONY. Please, if it's lessons, I shall never understand. Nurse says I'm a dunce.

LITTLE OLD MAN. Listen. (TONY *puts his hands behind his back, and feet together, as if he were standing in a class-room.*) Have you ever been to the seaside?

TONY. 'Course I have.

LITTLE OLD MAN. Have you ever noticed when the sea goes out, it leaves lots of little pools behind, among the rocks?

TONY. Paddly pools, yes.

LITTLE OLD MAN. The water in the paddly pools is just the same as the water in the great big sea; and the life in you and me is just the same as the life that is everywhere; the paddly pools run into the great live sea; you and I can do the same.

TONY. I'm sure I couldn't repeat that without a mistake.

(*A green person bounds on to the stage.*)

LITTLE OLD MAN. Ah! here's a great friend of mine who's going to take care of you for a little while. Let me introduce you. The Soul of the Short Green Grass . . . this is Tony.

TONY. (*Always polite—holding out his hand.*) How d'you do?

THE SOUL OF THE SHORT GREEN GRASS. (*With a tremendous vitality.*) This is splendid. Little human child, you don't know what a glorious time you're going to have. You will clutch tight on to the great

clean earth in one long joyous embrace that never ends. You will know the joy of the sun, and the light air, and the dew, and the rain, and the vast quiet nights. You will carpet the roots of the great trees ; you will peep down into the secret homes of the wild creatures—their dear eyes will look out at you in the first cool morning mists. You will feel yourself stirring wonderfully with a myriad life, moving, living, loving among your sweet green blades. (*A very beautiful little person has come on.*) Here are the Wild Flowers, the little songs among my grass.

THE WILD FLOWERS. (*Taking TONY by the hand.*) Your spirit shall mingle with my spirit and I will scatter you among the fields and woods and lanes and hedges, and you shall know the joy, the joy, the joy, of making the world beautiful.

(*THE SOUL OF THE TREES has entered.*)

THE TREES. I am the Trees. Come with me and you shall stand up—tall and strong and beautiful ; gazing, gazing up—learning the never-ceasing wonder of the sky. You shall feel the loving clasp of the brown earth on your roots ; and you shall stretch out your arms and twisted fingers, and, as the air wraps you round, know that there is no kiss like the kiss of the wind. You, too, shall feel life moving within your bark—and the dear chattering birds among your branches. You shall learn wisdom from the noises of the day, and greater wisdom from the silence of the night.

(*A furry thing has bounded on to the stage.*)

LITTLE OLD MAN. Here's an old friend of yours. This is the Soul of All the Rabbits.

THE SOUL OF ALL THE RABBITS. (*Whisking and bounding about in magnificently irrepressible animal*

spirits.) Manchild—Little Manchild—you're going to be one of us. Have you ever known anything so splendid? (*With delighted squeaks and perhaps a somersault or two he frolics close around TONY.*) You'll learn the joy of eyes and ears and a nose! The smell of the forest pools! Moonlight games in the woods! The cool, beautiful, dawn air! O! Ho! the joy of just being alive!

TONY. What about old farmer Parkinson's dog?

THE SOUL OF ALL THE RABBITS. Ho! He's a silly old fool of a dog—such a silly old fool. Our mothers taught us to "freeze"—to be so still, the eyes of men can't see us; to keep to the shelter of our friends the thorn bushes, so the hawks can't reach us—to run and double and dodge, so the dogs can't catch us.

TONY. Everything hunts rabbits—I should be frightened of being killed.

LITTLE OLD MAN. You won't know what "being killed" means, so you won't be frightened.

TONY. Little Old Man—perhaps you can tell me something Grandpa never will—where do the rabbits go to when they die?

LITTLE OLD MAN. Of course I can. The life that is in each—comes back to the Soul of All the Rabbits—a little bit wiser than it went out—that's how the race evolves.

TONY. What's evolves?

LITTLE OLD MAN. Well, if lots of rabbits get caught by enemies because they haven't got a particular-coloured coat in a particular kind of country—each little Rabbit Spirit returns to the Soul of All the Rabbits and tells it; and sooner or later, they get the right-coloured coat. (*From without, the sound of children laughing.*) Ah—here they are! It's time we were starting.

TONY. Who are "they," and how are we going to start?

LITTLE OLD MAN. "They" are the Spirits of the Sunset—and we are going to start my favourite way. You will fling yourself in colours across the evening sky until you watch the sun drop over the edge of the world. And then my friends here will look after you. (THE LITTLE OLD MAN becomes immensely serious.) Little child of men, I want you to learn a little of the untellable joy of the great life. From the littlest flower that smiles from its mossy bed, to the greatest star that blazes in endless space, how *good* everything is! . . . I shall be waiting for you when you come back.

(THE SPIRITS OF THE SUNSET *invade the stage.*

They can be of various ages and sizes, and should be draped in various sunset colours. The scene should be a great pæan of joy. THE SPIRITS OF THE SUNSET speak.)

I'm going to fall backwards half across the sky and roll headlong down a bank of clouds.

I shall make the winds tear me a great rift in the sky—and then I shall lie in it.

I shall stretch out thinly along the edge of some great cloud, and watch the day fade out.

We are to float about the sun—wrapping him round as he sheds off his robes of colour—making us glorious.

I will splash down to the earth, into the window-panes, and then laugh back at you.

I will climb the highest arches of the sky and fill the dome of heaven with my joy.

I know a river flowing among deep silent woods. I will lean down and see my mirrored beauty in its pools.

And I will dive in you—and bathed in your clear colour, stretch thin fingers pale across the East.

LITTLE OLD MAN. Up and away! Come along, come along. Come along. All of you.

SOME OF THE SPIRITS. Up and away.

(Some of the spirits dancing up the bank, leap from it and disappear—their colours immediately begin to fill the sky.)

LITTLE OLD MAN. *(To some others.)* Now then. Time enough to play when we're in the sky.

THE SPIRITS. Up and away.

(They leap over the bank apparently into the sky.)

LITTLE OLD MAN. *(To some more.)* Children—children—the clouds are waiting. Come!

THE SPIRITS. Up and away.

(They disappear.)

LITTLE OLD MAN. *(To the last of them.)* You were the last yesterday evening. The winds are waiting to sweep you up. Come, up and out over the world.

THE LAST OF THE SPIRITS. Up and away.

(THE LITTLE OLD MAN and TONY are alone.)

LITTLE OLD MAN. And now——

(But suddenly TONY bursts into tears.)

TONY. I don't want to go with you—I'm frightened, I am. You're all doing such funny things! I don't want to be anything—only myself.

LITTLE OLD MAN. Tony, this isn't very brave.

TONY. Don't want to be brave—all by myself.

LITTLE OLD MAN. TONY.

TONY. Yes?

LITTLE OLD MAN. Hide your eyes.

(TONY does. THE LITTLE OLD MAN turns round. His beard comes off—his cloak falls from him and he is a little girl.)

THE LITTLE GIRL. Hullo !

TONY. Hullo!!!...Where's my Little Old Man gone?

LITTLE GIRL. I'm to take care of you—so you won't be alone. (*She holds out her hand.*) Will you come with me ?

TONY. Y—yes. (*They join hands and she leads him up the bank. A black-out.*)

SCENE III : THIS SIDE AGAIN.

In a moment it is light again back "on this side." GRANDPA sleeps peacefully as we left him. TONY's voice is heard calling.) Grandpa! Grandpa! Grandpa!! (*He climbs over the bank—and runs to his grandfather.*) Wake up! . . . wake up! wake up!! have you been to sleep all the time ?

GRANDPA. All the time! What! Good heavens! it isn't past my tea time, is it ? (*He consults his watch.*) No, of course it isn't.

TONY. You mustn't go to sleep again. O Grandpa—such wonderful—wonderful—wonderful adventures I've been having—such lots and lots, I don't know where to begin to tell.

GRANDPA. What are you talking about ?

TONY. (*With a wave of his hand upwards.*) Oooh ! I've been up there.

GRANDPA. Tony !

TONY. Yes. Blown into all sorts of shapes I was—and tumbled right across the sky. I've been a great big tree and a tiny, tiny, tiny, tiny little twig on the end of a branch—and a great big field and wee soft blade of grass—and all the time the Little Girl was talking to me—

GRANDPA. (*Rather frightened.*) Tony—Tony—are you awake ?

TONY. (*Unheeding—pointing out to the audience.*) That field—and the woods across and the little silver river and the blue hills beyond—that's all mine.

GRANDPA. (*Quite frightened.*) Tony!

TONY. Yes. 'Cos I love it. The Little Girl said that was the only way you can really have a thing, by loving it. And I do love it. I love everything *tremendously*. Grandpa, have you ever felt really *close* to things—ooooh—as close—as—when I used to jump into Mummy and Daddy's bed? It's a beauty feeling! Gracious! I forgot. The Little Old Man said he'd be waiting for me. (*He rushes to the top of the bank and stands looking over.*) He's not there.

(*But THE LITTLE OLD MAN'S voice is heard.*)

LITTLE OLD MAN'S VOICE. My Three Friends!

THE VOICES OF THE THREE FRIENDS. We are here.

LITTLE OLD MAN'S VOICE. My plan is good. Go to the land of men; to every nation and to every home and teach the children what I have taught this child. Only the children—the grown-ups will think it nonsense. We meet again in five hundred years. Till then, good-bye.

THE VOICES OF THE THREE FRIENDS. Five hundred years. Good-bye.

(*The sound of their voices dies away, till it might be the wind sighing through the woods.*)

TONY. (*Stretching out his arms again.*) All that—all mine. The whole world might belong to everyone like that . . . without any barbed wire or quarrelling. Wouldn't that be nice for everyone?

GRANDPA. Tony, come here. (*Kissing him with a wise shake of his old head.*) What nonsense you're talking!

(*Curtain.*)

PRESS NOTICES

PADDLY POOLS

Paddy Pools, specially written by Mr. Miles Malleson, in his best vein, to show us how the love of the universal life, which animates nature and man alike, may some day overcome the forces of death and destruction now rampant in the world. With incidental music by Mr. Norman O'Neill, the piece was very grateful. . . .—*The Times*.

But the gem—and surprise—of the afternoon was undoubtedly Mr. Malleson's play *Paddy Pools*. Quite the most delicious romance of its kind since the Blue Bird first winged its way into fame. . . .—*The Evening Standard*.

THE LITTLE WHITE THOUGHT

There was the sort of fancy in it which we are apt nowadays to call Barrieish, but it is as old as Hans Andersen at least . . . genuine poetic quality.—*The Manchester Guardian*.

Wise and dainty, charmingly written.—*The Observer*.

Touched with real imaginative beauty and delicacy.—*Ipswich Evening Star*.

A real gem.—*Referee*.

Mr. Miles Malleson's really delightful little psychological fantasy, a remarkable one-act play.—*The Sunday Pictorial*.

A charming little play depicting the intercourse and conflict of various thoughts in a man's mind—the thought of somebody else's wealth, the thought of beauty, the thought of the girl he loves, day dreams, &c.—unified by a new thought of the purpose of life.—*The Athenæum*.

YOUTH

Aptly entitled *Youth*. . . . Altogether, we are indebted to him for an agreeably unconventional afternoon.—William Archer in *The Star*.

It is fresh, frank, original, romantic, with the additional quality that it is true . . . an author of great promise. His observation is as keen as his projection is vivid and accurate.—J. T. Grein in *The Sunday Times*.

By MILES MALLESON,

*Author of "A Man of Ideas," "Hide and Seek,"
"The Threshold," "The Little White Thought,"
"Youth," etc.*

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THE THRESHOLD: *A Comedy in
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(Produced at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre.)

"The Threshold" in the title of the play indicates the doorway to the fuller condition of life which opens to a boy of twenty who has been nurtured in the seclusion of a country vicarage, and who comes upon his first experience of real and vital emotion in such a way as one stepping abruptly from the cloister into a bewildering city thoroughfare. The psychological development of "the Boy" is set forth with singular insight and skill in a play, which although "modern" in every sense of the word, is distinguished by dramatic form and incident.—*Glasgow Weekly Mail.*

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